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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

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17 May 1974

ROMANIA-YUGOSLAVIA

Bucharest Downgrades Representation to LCY Congress

The Romanian delegation to the coming Yugoslav party congress, headed by party secretary Ilie Verdet, is of lower rank than the delegation Bucharest sent to the 1969 Congress. The drop in representation probably reflects Romanian unhappiness over the current state of bilateral relations, which have cooled since last year over Mideast policy differences and the beginnings of a Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement. In addition, Tito reportedly said in early May that Brezhnev is expected to attend the congress. If the Soviet leader does go to Belgrade, the resulting atmosphere of Soviet-Yugoslav friendship might prove very uncomfortable for the Romanian delegation.

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Nevertheless, the two Balkan mavericks have overriding common interests which undoubtedly will be reaffirmed if the oft-postponed meeting between Ceausescu and Tito takes place as scheduled in July.

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